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EXECUTIVE AND PERSONNEL
MANAGEMENT
ON THE
NATIONAL FORESTS



A MEDIUM FOR THE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS AND
EXPERIENCES BY OPERATING EXECUTIVES
FOR THE BETTERMENT OF THE
SERVICE

CONFIDENTIAL - FOR SERVICE MEMBERS ONLY

ADMINISTRATIVE STUDY

By A. C. Shaw

Supervisor Ouachita National Forest, Region Seven

What should be included:

The past ten years have been years of progress for this country. The Forest Service has kept in step to some extent.

We consider that we have a better understanding of our job than heretofore and have made many forward strides in our many lines of endeavor.

There was a universal wail of poverty in this organization at the beginning of the last ten year period. We felt that we were not financed to do essential jobs and that was most assuredly true. Many of us said that if we could pay District Rangers as much as \$200 a month, if we could finance the travel of our men, if we could get a few roads, towers and phone lines and some tools to work with, we could obtain satisfactory efficiency and accomplish more than we ever dreamed of doing. We have realized the desires of ten years ago only to find that we have not reached the objectives of that time. Something is wrong.

The Service organization, its jobs and its methods are the result of growth. Much of this growth is the result of outside pressure and of the discovery that there were jobs to be done, that "things demanded attention". In other words, we have stumbled on these jobs, added them to our existing duties and gone on with the tasks as a part of our routine.

These jobs and duties have increased to the point where there is hardly a title in the organization that carries with it duties and responsibilities comparative with those of twenty years ago.

The Forest Service is comparable to the corporation that has grown to fairly large dimensions. Along with our physical progress has come expansion in other lines of work that may or may not spell progress. Although the Forester's Office has held its overhead down, the overhead of the Regional and Supervisor's Office presents a startling picture in contrast with the 1920 period.

It is continually said that the chief point of variance between a governmental and a private organization is that the former lacks the incentive of profit. The incentive of profit however does not seem to be productive of efficiency or managerial ability, since the statements of financial houses indicate that 80% or more of the "businesses" end up in failure. A small percentage is recognized as successful entirely because of sheer managerial ability. We are concerned with and should endeavor to emulate this select company.

There are several angles of approach to organization efficiency.

The most common and characteristically human is to wait until the profits get too low and then "do something about it." Perhaps a better one is a systematic and thorough study to determine basic faults and overcome them long before they become troublesome. In other words, fix the roof before it leaks.

None of us consider our organization, part, partial or whole, perfect. None of us feel that we are progressing towards our objectives as rapidly as might be possible. There are few who consider it impossible or even unduly difficult to improve in every line of endeavor. Yet we are usually unable to outline the course that will bring about improvement. We know vastly more about an infinitely more complex and detailed routine, but actual physical improvement leaves much to be desired.

There is but one way of knowing or learning more about our jobs, and that is through study or research. It will do us little good to bemoan the fact that office work ties up Rangers and Supervisors to the point where they are unable to spend sufficient time in the field unless we get down and dig to determine whether or not our office duties are essential, whether or not we are spending more time on them than is really justified and what modification should take place.

The Administrative Organization no longer feels a great need of silvicultural research. Most Regions already have more of that kind of data and information than can be applied in the next few years, or at least so much more of it than any other kind of data that it now behooves us to spend much of our thought and energy to those portions of our work that consume the money and cause the grief.

The Loveridge Plans, the routine of office duties, Forms 34a and other cost data have long indicated that the general administration group of activities costs the money, causes the work, controls the output and receives the negligence.

Inasmuch as most of our money and most of our trouble comes under the heading of general administration, it appears that this group of activities should be the first to receive the benefit of administrative study. Up to the present time we have made some administrative studies. The Loveridge Plan is essentially an administrative study. The Regional Foresters' conference in the Winter of 1930 was an administrative study. However both forms of study have, to a great extent, failed to reach the root of our difficulties. The Regional Foresters' study was chiefly a study of road and fire improvement allotments. The Loveridge Plan is confined to the smallest unit of administration, namely, the Ranger District. There is as much or more money spent on individual Forests outside of Ranger District organizations as there is on them. Therefore, the study cannot stop with the Ranger District alone, and neither can it stop with the individual Forest.

taken. These are:

1. Problems requiring study on a Service wide basis.
2. Problems requiring a comprehensive and thorough study on individual Forests by the Forester's, Regional Forester's and Supervisor's offices.
3. Individual studies by the Forest force itself.

This study course may be essentially for the Supervisor. It may be that we are the ones who should do all of the study, but P. K. has suggested that this course is perhaps as good a forum or even a better one than the soap boxes I saw in Hyde Park or outside the old Tower gates in London, for someone may read our kicks while the aspiring British orators seemed to have trouble getting audiences.

A. Personnel.

First of all always comes personnel. If all of our men were really 90% or better in each qualification of our rating scales, the Supervisors would be rid of most of his troubles. The same for the Regional Office. We know our men are not perfect, and yet we don't know why they are not.

1. We could look into the problem of Forest Service recruiting. A statistical study of records determining percentages and numbers of successes and failures recruited through each class of Civil Service examination should bear fruit. What general types of men do best? How can we improve our selective methods.

2. Does the Civil Service examination for Junior Foresters stress the educational qualifications essential for an all around administrative man, or is it designed essentially to recruit men for research positions, thus overstressing subjects of minor value to the dirt forester whether he be employed by the Forest Service, State or corporation? Many forest schools, without knowing it, shape their courses to train men to pass the Junior Forester examination. The States and private corporations must recruit technical foresters from these forest school men. If the course is not well adapted to administration and likewise not well adapted to private work, perhaps the Forest Service should take the lead in indicating the need for a change. In other words, are we really recruiting the best men?

3. How can we make the most use of the probationary period? How shall we be assured that we will not eliminate good men who are slow starters? (Has it ever happened once?) How can we thoroughly test a man to be assured of his possession of the needed qualifications? Are we actually using the probationary period as a test?

4. Why are failures? Is it because of inherent defects not noticed during the probationary period? Is it because of faulty

assignments or improper handling during the early days of organization? Because of faulty supervision later on? What are we going to do about it? (Attempt rehabilitation while they are still young enough to adapt themselves to new callings, or put up with incompetency from them for twenty to forty years more?)

5. What can be accomplished through transfers and assignments as a training basis?

6. How can a Supervisor get training aside from self-study, experimentation on his individual Forest and contact with FO and RO inspectors? Here would it be practical for the Regional Office or the Forester's Office to dig into the records and determine from study just exactly what training and experience best suits a man for supervisory position?

It appears to the writer that the foregoing six subjects can be handled not only through our own study but also through statistical studies by the higher offices. We can do something by studying the small groups of men we have under us as men we have known in times gone by. Our superior officers may be able to do much more because of their greater experience and better acquaintanceship and more voluminous records.

B. Temporary Force.

The temporary force can be considered entirely separate from the personnel handling of the regular organization. First, they are recruited in a different fashion. The tenure of the individual is almost solely within the control of the Supervisor as the duties are different and except as a means of recruiting permanent personnel the handling is on an entirely different basis. Second, our object differs in that we are essentially interested in filling jobs that do not lead to higher positions. We have known for many years that the temporary personnel was one of our greatest problems and yet little seems to have been done to overcome these difficulties. Would it not be possible and feasible to study the situation very closely with view of determining what we could do, considering of course our limitations? Have we too many half-skilled temporaries who could be replaced by a smaller number of permanents?

C. Instructions.

There are three classes of instructions, first, the Service wide instructions, such as the National Forest Manual, the Administrative, Property and Fiscal Regulations of the Department of Agriculture, pamphlets and circular letters from the Forester's Office; the second class would consist of the Regional Office handbooks and circular letters; the third class would be the Forest plans of work, management plans, job specifications, etc.

Jim Scott of the White Mountain recently outlined forty-seven varieties of instructions in answering a letter to the Regional

Office on the subject of Handbooks. Being less ambitious, the writer let it slide by mentioning the fact that he had one large and two small desk drawers of instructions and manuals.

The Forest Reserve Manual for 1902 has ninety pages. The Use Book of 1906 has a hundred and ninety-five pages, while the Use Book of 1908 has two hundred and ninety-eight pages. Anyone of these three would go into a coat pocket. Twelve years ago, on entering the Service, the writer was impressed with the knowledge the old-time Ranger had of the National Forest Manual. Today he is equally impressed with the lack of knowledge that the average Forest Officer on a Forest has of manuals and instructions. It must be admitted that we cannot condense all of our instructions and outlines of procedure into a pocket notebook of ninety pages, but a great deal of the present day instructions are repetition. Most of them are too wordy, requiring too much reading to get the point. It is doubtful if any one person on a Forest is fully familiar with more than fifty percent of the written instructions applying to his job. There is room for study, yes, research, on the part of all of us. If we cannot understand the instructions ourselves, how can we expect to outline them to others and how are we going to know what constitutes the job?

D. Reports.

The average Forest has anywhere from 150 to 200 reports per annum. These are time consuming and their value is questionable. Is there not room for a study of our entire system of reports to determine if two or three monthly reports will not take the place of all of the regular reports we are now sending in? Reports must be costing the Service several hundred thousand dollars a year, and it is questionable if we can afford to spend such a very large percentage of our funds in telling what we have done, what we hope to do, or would like to do.

E. Inspection.

A general classification of inspection might divide inspection into the following groups:

1. Inspector learning unit.
2. Inspector checking or studying some separate activity.
3. Inspector training Supervisor or specialists in separate activity.
4. Inspector checking Supervisor or other personnel.
5. Inspector studying Forest to determine best application of general practices and standards.

The first four classes have little in their make up that can be considered as administrative research. The fifth, while most important, is all too infrequent. Would it be good business to select at least one Forest in each Region every year and to make that

Forest the subject of general administrative investigation and study for the purpose of determining the fitness and applicability of our general policies and general methods? Such a study could well be undertaken by members of the Forester's and Regional Office and the Supervisor and Staff, assisted, of course, by District Rangers. Through such a method we might be able to arrive at better practices. It must be remembered that we have 160 different units in our organization. These units are further broken up into subunits and if we attempt to formulate a policy to apply equally well to all, we may have overlooked many a bet and have formulated policies that did not apply particularly well to any. It may possibly be that we have not gone far enough into standardization and still it may be that we have gone too far. At present the only check on such matters is the attempt of Regional and the Forester's Office officers to determine this through individual discussion with various field men and through inspections that are not always designed so that all activities could be correlated.

Although the writer outlines at the outset three forms of administrative studies, namely, the Service wide study conducted principally by the Forester's Office personnel, the cooperative study calling in Forester's Office, Regional Office and field personnel and a study conducted by the field personnel itself, administrative research can still be considered in another light. All writers on the subject of research, both industrial and technical, seem agreed that most forms of research can be carried on best only on a laboratory scale. That is, many experiments must be carried on in such fashion so that all, or if not all, the majority of the factors are subject to some check or control. Otherwise, the results obtained are so open to question that they can hardly be regarded as criteria or guides for future operation. The laboratory, however, cannot be established nor its problems outlined until we first take census or stock of our entire operation to determine what studies must be conducted in the so-called laboratory. It is often stated that a great deal of the progress made in industrial research is due to the fact that industrial concerns set up an independent body of men who are given the time and the means to work out their project. However, at the same time such research organizations were not given the liberty of picking their projects. They were assigned problems which have proven troublesome to the line officers and which line officers had discovered to be of sufficient importance to warrant the expenditure of a considerable sum in their solution. Unless the line officer carefully studies his organization and its problems, he will be in no position to determine or assist in the determination of the problems that are in need of solution, and he will be confronted with a group working for their own glory and not the determination of ways and means to solve administrative problems.

This study course will undoubtedly bring to the front the facts

that there is much in the way of method and procedure which is in need of an overhaul. The Supervisor is vitally concerned with any changes in policy which may affect the administration of his unit. He is fully aware of the fact that change is necessary and that change will come. It now remains for us to do our utmost to see to it that those facts which are of greatest importance to us receive the most limelight, in order that when the day comes when we really do enter on a detailed study of our administration methods through laboratory measures those studies will be directed to the spots which help us the most and are of the greatest general application, rather than subjects which appeal to an individual group of men who are not primarily concerned with the task of putting their discoveries into the realm of actual accomplishment.

REVIEWS

Management Research Methods and Qualifications:
by W. J. Donald, Published in *Harvard Business Review*,
January, 1927

The Present Status of Management Research:
by C. S. Yoakum, Professor of Personnel Administration,
University of Michigan

Both articles emphasize the need for research in the techniques and methods for handling management problems. For example a financial statement in itself contains very little direct information, but recently accountants have developed methods for analyzing it and now it is made to yield a great deal of information of value in management.

On a lesser scale take our own problems of the ranger's diary. As a descriptive statement covering two hundred or so jobs in a month it was hard to grasp—an incomprehensible jumble of statements. But analyze it according to one of the techniques developed a few years ago and it becomes a useable understandable picture of the job. Many other such techniques are needed. Industry today makes vast demands on the man equipped with scientific methods of approach to the solution of problems.

Because of these demands for scientific thinking, industry is recruiting an increasing number of executives from engineering. This is not because of their knowledge of engineering but because of their training in a method of approach to problems. Unfortunately not all engineering students have the ability to apply the method to a new set of conditions. Too many college men merely learn things; "Mere mechanical lore never made a man a scientist." Such men may be of value in a strictly engineering job, but they do not make good executives.

Of course there are many technical problems that require research. That is universally accepted, but the point is that, "the purely technical side of production has no longer a monopoly on the need for scientific methods of research". Of course no organization bases anything like all its decisions or methods or policies on studies or on data or records systematically treated. Of course everyone copies methods, follows precedent, acts on hunches, and in the main does things the way they have been done and for no better reason than that they have been done that way. But business management is developing into a profession and a profession must have a better basis.

"There is a clear line of distinction between management research, management methods, and management research methods." There is a great deal of discussion these days of management methods. New books are published every month. Meetings and

associations of executives are largely for this purpose. We have indulged in some of it ourselves. All this discussion has done and is doing a great deal of good. But it is not research. However, there can be no study of a problem until there is a realization that a problem exists. Discussion produces such realization. When you find that another executive uses a method other than yours instead of accepting or rejecting his method you may be tempted to find out from a test which is the better. In this way you make a beginning in management studies.

Mr. Donald says that a great deal of this studies work is being done all over the country and that it is contributing largely to the improvement of management. But there is not much being done in research methods. Here are a few of the topics suggested by Donald as needing study:

1. The method of measuring the results of the installation of an incentive plan; not experience with or the results from installing it.
2. The method of determining and testing a test for selecting employees; not experience with tests for employees.
3. The technique of making a job analysis of standardizing salaries and wages; not a classification of standard jobs or a salary or wage standardization plan.

Not only is there need for these studies but there is need for some form of recognition for men engaged in such work. Such work pays in dollars but there is needed also the non-financial satisfactions that go with the recognition of achievements in intellectual pursuits.

Dr. Yoakum illustrates the need for methods study by citing two cases involving masses of data too great to be handled by simple descriptive methods. By applying recently developed methods of statistical analysis, the solution of one problem was simple. For the other no technique is yet developed. The case method while inadequate is all that is available. But while emphasizing the need for the development of new techniques it is well to remember, "that there is always a general procedure approved perhaps by the form into which the human mind is moulded. This general method or logic of thought consists schematically in strictly locating the point of difficulty, in allowing the imagination of experience and originality to play over the variety of conditions involved, and in avoiding the pitfalls of prepossession. The special method of a field like that of management research must operate within these general conditions of all method."

The difficulty with management research is that there are so many variables involved. We shall possibly always fail in the control of one condition at a time and shall need to employ judgment in evaluating results. But variables themselves can be studied.

One result of studies is the showing of the inadequacy of experience as a basis for decision. By experience one acquires skill but not knowledge. "Experience tries every possible method of going wrong before going right." But all these studies while as yet inadequate are preparing the way for adequate management methods.

Now what does all this mean to us, if anything? Does it mean that we must first develop methods before we can study executive problems? That is not my idea. Most of our problems can be solved by that universal technique called "the scientific method". These men are talking about fundamental research while what we want mostly is applied research; studies and tests of methods or the application of techniques already developed.

One reason for bringing up these papers, however, was this: You will find problems that you would like to study but you do not know how to begin. The techniques used in the physical sciences do not apply. There are too many variables. Humans are involved and human factors won't stay put. For this reason many scientists trained in the physical sciences refuse to attempt studies. It is difficult and new. It requires pioneering. This is exemplified by the studies in progress at the Hawthorn Plant of the Western Electric Company. They started on what seemed a simple study. They got side tracked on to other and more interesting problems. They continue to develop new problems faster than they progress with the old. Most of their work is in developing methods. I know of no other research laboratory that has attracted so much or so wide an interest yet they have actually done very little. This merely illustrates the appeal and the need.

But I hope I have not over emphasized the difficulties. There are plenty of methods that we can test, studies we can make, and simple techniques that we can develop. It is a part of management, modern management, and as Dr. Donald says, executives who can do those things are in demand and the demand is growing.

Wake Up Business: Eight challenges Business Management Must Face—or Fail by W. J. Donald. Published in Forbes Magazine, September 15.

Mr. Donald has a doctor's degree from Harvard in Economics, and has had experience in research work and as a business executive. He is said to know personally more executives than any other man in the country; he is one of the industrial advisors of the President's Personnel Council, and is in demand as a writer on Management problems. He seems to have no particular hobby but believes that management will improve most from intelligent study of every phase of its activities.

In this article Donald says that some Companies are sitting back waiting for the depression to pass. For these Companies it

probably never will pass for when the up-turn comes they will be hopelessly behind. Others are re-examining, re-appraising and re-estimating conditions and the needs of the future and adjusting themselves to things as they are. The conditions of 1929 are gone forever. We must prepare to do business on a new basis.

I think most of you will be interested in the eight fundamental assumptions which Dr. Donald believes the executive, planning for the future must face:

1. New Leadership Inevitable—When conditions revive there will be a new alignment; new Companies will step out in front and new industries will pass old competitors. This is almost certain to happen.

2. New Top-Notchers Coming: A great many reputations have already been strewn by the wayside. Others find in the depression new opportunities to demonstrate ability. These men are not depending on what they know for they realize that much of what they know is already out of date. It is the analytical, experimental, challenging type of executive that is coming to the fore.

3. No Return to the Past: Business of the next decade will not be done as it was in the last. The past is dead. Management is an ever-widening circle. Those who survive must be ready to meet new conditions.

4. Weak Spots Must Go: Management is streaky. Many Companies pride themselves on the quality of their management, but there are few that do not have their weak departments. Now is a good time to search out these weak spots and rebuild them.

5. New Standards of Effectiveness: Too many Companies became self-satisfied during the past decade. They mistook expanding values for earned profits. Too many are unprogressive. But there are exceptions. It is the Company and the individual that is out looking for new ideas, new methods, new principles and up-to-date practices that will set the pace. Increased effectiveness in management is the only assurance for the future.

6. Business Conditions Will Change: Techniques will change. New products will replace old. New machines will replace men. Up-to-date factories will become obsolete. Management must prepare for rapid change.

7. Prices May Stay Down: We have no assurance that average price levels will rise. It is good business for any Company to assume that they will not and prepare to do business with conditions as they are. During 1930 everyone was waiting for the upturn. It did not come and was not apt to come while we just waited. During 1931 many began to try to learn how to do business without waiting. Such effort will hasten the return of business and will increase profits should price levels rise.

8. Big Business Will Gain: While many mistakes have been made and many men have assumed that mere bigness is efficiency, nevertheless the merger movement will be resumed on a still larger scale. State lines will become more and more obliterated and national organizing will become commonplace. Yet competition will force effectiveness. No Company can control through size alone. To meet the situation will require better organization and better management.

I have briefed this article more as a matter of general interest than with the idea that it has any direct application to us. Naturally the depression has not affected us as it has the private industrial Company, yet can we assume that we will do business as usual when others are doing it differently?

How do these eight challenges apply to us or do they apply at all? My hunch is that the first two do not apply. We just simply are not organized on that basis, but even if we were I still do not think they would apply. But when we come down to "3" I wonder if we should not pay attention. Forestry of the future will not be the forestry we have dreamed of in the past. True, silviculture will not be affected by depressions, but forestry is a business and must find its place in the new scheme of business. The sooner foresters realize that the better. Number four, the Service recognizes and is doing more than most organizations to correct. Our chief reliance for correction (although not the only one) is for each individual to improve himself. If each of us does that, the weak spots will not last. The more I contact other organizations the higher I think we rate, but that doesn't mean we have no more to do.

"Six" like "three" deserves a lot of consideration. Just how outside changes will affect us I have no idea, but that they will affect us there can be no doubt. "Seven" will not disturb us as it will industrial organizations but it will be felt. Number "Eight" will, I presume affect us largely through its effect on the industries with which we do business. Just what that will be no one as yet knows, but we do know that there is more and more talk all the time of nation-wide planning and production control. Surely forestry needs such planning and such control if anything does.



Note: In pamphlet No. 1, page 8, paragraph 2, please add the following words between line two and three: "was unsatisfactory, while the intent of the law is just the opposite."

DISCUSSIONS

This method of publishing the discussions in the same pamphlet with the "lesson" has not been adopted as a permanent procedure—too many men have voted against it. However, not quite half the Supervisors have been heard from and it is somewhat handier for me to do it this way this time. When a full "quorum" has expressed a preference I will follow it. In the meantime this gives you a test, the thing we have been talking about.

I am including a few more of number one discussions just that you may see how the suggestion of subjects runs. It scarcely seems necessary to publish all. These chosen have no particular advantage over the others. They are just representative, and will, I think, give you an idea of how they run.

I am including also a few discussions of number two, on administrative studies. These are not yet due so only a few are in. It also will give you an idea as to what it is like to mix up discussions. If you do not like it, remember that most of you have not yet expressed an opinion.

DISCUSSIONS RELATING TO PAPER NUMBER ONE

Andrew Hutton

San Juan

Durango, Colorado

The new system of handling this course as suggested in the third paragraph on page 2 sounds good. The discussion of current administrative problems is what we need and each case should be definitely disposed of regardless of the time required. Definite conclusions should be reached in each case and plans made to put them into effect. We have discussed many problems and have gotten considerable good out of them, but in my opinion we have had too many cases where the final settlement has been left up in the air with no definite conclusions reached.

1. Study courses have done much good in the past. Some have, however, been too general in character and it has been difficult for me to tie the discussions to a definite problem in connection with our work. We need to study definite current problems, discuss them, draw definite clear-cut conclusions and apply them.

2. There are no doubt many current administrative and personnel problems which should be discussed. Among them I would suggest the following:

(1) What is the proper method to be used in judging ranges and how can we best teach new men? What is good range management and how can it be put into effect without waiting another 25 years?

(2) What is the best method to be used in getting the personnel to read and follow instructions, comply with standards, etc.?

(3) Should local forest officers be allowed to use some judgment in prosecuting man-caused fire cases?

(4) A study and discussion of our forms, records and reports seems advisable. I wonder sometimes how much of the volumes of data we compile is actually used and whether we can not secure the necessary information in simpler and more readable forms.

3. Lessons should, in my opinion, be sent out at about two week intervals and a time limit must be set for submitting discussions. Discussions on one subject should be kept together. They should by all means be summarized and definite conclusions reached.

Subjects for discussion should be separated as much as possible; however, there must of necessity be considerable overlapping.

It is believed that the field will take sufficient interest to keep you informed as to current problems, and that you are in a position to select sufficient live, current topics to make the course interesting and instructive.

4. It is my opinion that every supervisor and assistant supervisor should be required to participate in the discussions.

Fred Winn

Coronado

Tucson, Arizona

By all means drop the term "lessons". A better description would be "Discussions on Executive and Personnel Management on the National Forests." The term "lessons" is a misnomer.

1. The General idea is satisfactory and I favor the change along the lines you have outlined.

2. One of the phases of "Administrative Studies" I should like to have discussed, is that of solving the "peak-load" problem. How does industry handle this problem? Cannot the Service devise some method by which this load can be distributed to advantage?

3. Periods of two weeks will be satisfactory. You will have to limit the time when discussions must be in or you will find yourself in difficulties. Have you ever had the experience of asking for contributions to a publication of any sort, by a certain fixed date? Include all in one publication and adopt the group publication but keep to one subject at a time.

4. Supervisors should participate and the method should be similar to that in the past. The discussions can be routed to members of the Supervisor's staffs and such members should be allowed to contribute to the discussions if they so desire.

Roy A. Phillips

Nez Perce

Grangeville, Idaho

1. I rather like the idea of the change. It seems to me that

a freer expression of ideas, especially opinions will result. Thinking in the terms of a study course, I visualize the effort of bending wills and ideas to conform to a definite purpose or line of reasoning. The result is that members of the class, some at least will try to fall in with the instructor's ideas and will not follow out his own line of reasoning in a wholly free and unbiased manner. Instead of a study course perhaps you are in reality conducting something of a Council yourself, and the idea is that we are to give you the indication as to the trend of the discussion. At least it seems that this is going to lead to a lot of free thinking along certain lines.

2. There seems to be no getting away from training, in thinking of problems for discussion. In fact, training of some form or other seems to overshadow nearly everything else, particularly training of men for executives. Much has been said and a lot accomplished in training temporary men, yet there are many men from rangers on up that are not fitted or even trained for executive jobs. These men are costing the Government a lot of money in one way and another, and do not help the reputation of the Service materially. Then there is the matter of selection of men for promotion. Too often this is done through personal preference rather than on the basis of qualifications. We are required to prepare numerous reports that apparently do no one a great deal of good. The fact that apologies accompany many of them does not materially help the situation. Stabilization of organization seems to be a real need. Analyses have not yet accomplished this. We are still swinging from a decentralized to a centralized organization and back again.

But perhaps most of all we want to know how we can improve ourselves individually and collectively as executives, and the things I have mentioned above are merely signboards along the trail leading to the main objectives. Duplication of effort in many, nearly all, of the things we do is appalling, yet after all we get out of the job just about what we put into it; and if it is well executed at the start the effects of duplication at a later date is minimized.

3. I would favor having the lessons sent out every two weeks, and believe that a time limit of 30 days on answers is desirable. Separate lessons and discussions are believed advisable, although this is not so important. One subject at a time is preferable, I believe, even if the lessons have to be sent out oftener. It is believed that the field will turnish sufficient live questions to keep the course going. Why not call for one question with each lesson?

4. Anyone should participate who is sufficiently interested to want to take the course. Personally, I would like to see a few rangers participate, and quite a few Assistant Supervisors should come in. A good many valuable contributions would no doubt come from these men.

G. E. Martin

Absaroka

Livingston, Montana

The general idea of directing our thoughts toward the solving of specific, pertinent problems as they are brought up in the course of these proposed discussions appears good. The problems you have suggested as being appropriate for discussion, such as guard training, job analysis, personnel cases, and office standards, are good and in line with the general trend to increase efficiency and volume output.

Material progress has been made but it has not all been pure gain. The time that has been devoted in recent months to meeting those problems that are being currently stressed has, in some instances, been taken from other and more important tasks. We have become so engrossed in the process of building up a highly efficient, smooth-running, internal organization that we have in considerable measure lost sight of the need for currently developing those external influences that are equally important in successfully handling our job of protecting and administering the National Forests. We have reached the point where public goodwill is complacently accepted as our just due and as something that just grew like Topsy and will continue to thrive with only casual attention. At present, we are riding smoothly on the wave of public approval forced onward by the momentum of a quarter of a century of effort, but there are unmistakable signs of trouble ahead unless we do something about it. For example, the forest fire statistics for the United States dated June 19, 1931, which reached this office yesterday, show that there were 3272 incendiary fires during 1926, that this number increased each succeeding year until in 1930 the appalling number of 14,394 incendiary fires occurred, an increase in five years of 440%. The damage caused by incendiary fires on protected areas in 1930 amounted to \$2,934.020, or more than twice the Forest Service expenditure for general administration, forest extension, and research, as shown by the Forester's report for the fiscal year 1930.

All of this leads up to the suggestion that we thoroughly discuss that intangible factor public goodwill to determine how important it is, how our present practices and policies affect it, if we are gaining or losing in public approval, and what should be done about it.

The subject of transfers is also of vital importance both to the Forest Service and to the employees, and I should like to see it thoroughly discussed.

I should like very much to participate in these discussions and believe every one in the Service who wishes to should be permitted to send in their views.

C. S. Webb

Kootenai

Libby, Montana

1. It would seem the new type of study course as outlined

might offer advantages over the old. It should tend to bring about more initiative and creative effort of mind from the students. The idea of discussing the more current problems is, I believe, a good one.

2. Particularly I would like to have discussed the value of Job Specifications or rather Job Descriptions. How far should we best go with this? Should every employee under a Supervisor's direction, including Executive Assistant and Clerks be working under a definitely lined out job description? How definite or how general should these be Stated?

Your Administrative studies may cover this, at any rate Administrative studies seem a good topic to start with.

3. If lessons are not such as to require too much time for preparation, I believe they should come out each 10 days and probably at least every two weeks. Eight lessons would require $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 months outside of which there is often too little time available because of absence in the field. For the most men to secure the most benefit from the discussions, it is believed they should be put in with reasonable promptness. I believe they should be limited about the same as last year. Otherwise many very valuable discussions might come in too late for publication of discussions on the subject.

Think lessons and discussions should be segregated so that discussions won't necessarily have to come out on a schedule thereby preventing the publication of a valuable discussion arriving a little late. All discussions of a subject, if published in a group could better be studied, one against the other and would be in better shape for future reference when desired. One major subject at a time if discussions are lengthy. If not too lengthy, probably two could be handled at one time. It is thought the field men will evidence sufficient interest to keep you informed of any problems they wish discussed.

4. I believe each Supervisor should be asked to provide each of his men whom he believes will take an active and intelligent interest with a copy of the lessons. One copy to the Supervisor should do for him and his associates in most cases. I believe an Assistant Supervisor should participate if he cares to do so.

I see no need for limitations as to who shall take part in the discussions, but think none should be required to take part. However an Assistant Supervisor wishing to take part should be permitted and urged to do so as a part of his training for advancement.

J. W. Humphrey

Manti

Ephraim, Utah

The plan outlined for the continuation of the study of Executive and Personnel Management will, I am sure, work out satisfactorily. The statement in the last sentence of pamphlet No. 1 hits the nail on the head and the previous lessons on this subject

have proven beneficial in the way pointed out in the statement referred to.

The reasons for failure in executive management are usually due to one of three things or a combination of two or all of them. First, the Supervisor may lack the natural ability, or in other words the job may be too big for him. Second, he may grow careless for any one of a number of reasons and fail to give that part of his work the careful thought and study it requires. This includes failure to study the methods of personnel management adopted by other organizations.

Third, he may fall into an assignment where his men are below standard and where for various reasons transfers on that particular forest cannot be worked out in a way that will keep the men interested and doing their best. The "flexible transfer system" referred to, if liberally applied, would no doubt bring about considerable improvement. The biggest objection, however, to transfers is that suitable opportunities are not always present on a single forest. A ranger may have unusual ability along one line, say timber sales work or grazing management. The timber on the district may be cut out or for other reasons the timber operations may fall off to such an extent that the services of an expert in that activity are not required, or a ranger who is an expert in grazing management may reach the place where a man with much less experience could handle the work satisfactorily. There are perhaps other forests where the services of such an officer are needed. Representatives of the Regional Office usually know of the special qualifications of such men, at least where his work is really outstanding. These Regional Office men also know of ranger districts where just such services could be used to advantage. It occurs to me that a representative from the Regional Office and the Supervisors from the two forests concerned might arrange for a transfer that would work out to very good advantage. It is somewhat difficult for Supervisors to trade men since it is usually only the poorer ranger that a Supervisor would be willing to transfer except where the transfer is asked for by the ranger. The real objection to such a plan is found in the fact that the family of the officer transferred might be dissatisfied and the officer might hear so much complaint at home that it might influence his attitude toward his work.

Ten days or two weeks is often enough for the lessons to meet my convenience. Even then it may be necessary to delay action on some of them although I hope to get all I can out of each lesson regardless of the fact that my discussions, like this one, may be late in reaching you.

I am sure that all forest officers who study the lessons will be benefitted by the study. I don't believe, however, that the lessons should be sent to anyone who does not request them and at this time of the year the rangers are, most of them, spending consider-

able time on the Rangers' Correspondence Courses and other home studies.

Rex King

Crook

Safford, Arizona

1. Last year's course was primarily a study of conditions in the industries, with which we were, as a class quite unfamiliar. It was largely new material, and the method of definite, assigned lessons and restricted discussion fitted the conditions excellently. Through the study of this basic material a foundation has been laid. Having learned the principles, the next step is naturally to see how they can be applied to our special conditions, and I believe this indicates the more open or less restricted discussion method. It is now a case of adapting principles, which have been found to apply to general industry, to Forest Service conditions; or perhaps (to assume another point of view) to remove the doubt that such principles and methods actually do apply to Forest Service work. A discussion free of restrictions or penalties will shake-down the subject to its natural level and also permit those unburdening movements of the chest, so well beloved by Forest Officers when no outsiders are present. There is nothing so sobering as to get one's superheated thoughts on paper and then read them and realize that others have read them.

A valuable supplement to the course, in my estimation, would be a summary compiled by the "head master". This might take the form of a check list, a collection of the best ideas with appropriate comments, or a text drawn from the material submitted combined with that from the outside. The idea would be to produce a document that could be referred to or studied without the necessity of wading through a large amount of waste material. It really would be a text book on National Forest Management. A not unimportant part of it should be a check list of minor shortcuts and economical methods in both office and field procedure. Perhaps, also a danger section could be included of things that have already been tried and proven unsuccessful or dangerous.

2. I do not believe there will be any difficulty in finding problems to discuss. I would say that it would be more difficult to hold the discussions down. A few of those that I would like to see dealt with (suggested at random and without half trying) are:

- a. Organization of a National Forest.
- b. Master objective of a Forest and Ranger district.
- c. Job descriptions for clerks, supervisors, and assistant supervisors.
- d. The relation of statistics, to the accomplishment of our objectives.
- e. The advantages and disadvantages of detailed job by job control of a ranger, as against the setting up for him of

clear-cut objectives and relying on his initiative and energy to carry them out.

- f. A personnel rating scheme which is workable and in which all parties to it have confidence.
- g. Leadership versus swivel chair, ex post facto, criticism.
- h. Coordination between the ranger district work plans and their specific headings and the cost keeping system and its headings.
- i. An over-haul of our diary system.
- j. Job descriptions for the various entrance grades (at least minimum requirements) to be used for checking up on prospects and furnished the Forest Schools.

3. I would prefer to have the lessons once a month and run the course yearlong. In other words, make it a permanent service, rather than a "winter" job. I think it will be almost necessary to limit the time at which the discussions have to be in. By separating the lessons and the discussions, as in the past, each discussion can be bound directly to the lesson to which it refers. I presume that most of us will desire to preserve them.

Publishing all of the discussions at one time seems best, unless a system of re-discussion, rebuttal, further ideas, etc., (that is continuing to discuss a topic until it is dead) is adopted. The latter is not a bad idea it seems to me.

Having several topics at the same time is probably the most economical, both as to printing and also the supervisor's time.

I do not believe you will have any difficulty in being kept informed of live topics on Forests. However, if you should I suggest you subscribe to the local newspapers published on the Forests and read the editorials bearing on the Forest Service.

4. I see no reason why anyone should be kept out of a good thing like this if he really wants in. I believe however that he will appreciate it more if he asks for it himself.



DISCUSSION RELATIVE TO PAPER NUMBER TWO

J. N. Templar

Helena

Helena, Montana.

Before undertaking to add to the world's store of knowledge concerning Executive and Personnel Management, I should like to digress enough to express my admiration for and appreciation of Supervisor King's paper in the December issue of the Executive and Personnel Management pamphlet. It expresses my opinions exactly, and it brings out so clearly that which, with my limited vocabulary, I am unable to adequately express. that I am seizing this opportunity to salaam the author.

And while I am at it, I just want to quote that sentence in paragraph 4, under the heading "The Endless Spirals of Progress", which reads as follows:

"The average mind accepts these methods which have been followed for a considerable time, resents, change, and belives unworkable that which has not been used before." In the words of Andy, "Don't I know it!" And I imagine the Regional Office appreciates the thought, in view of its experiences in introducing the plow unit. I only hope it remembers this common fault when I ask permission to consolidate the Helena Ranger's files with those of the Supervisor. But to get on with the job, I shall start with Topic 1.

Topic 1:

The idea of making systematic studies to determine how best to do common, every-day jobs, is the proper course to pursue if we are to redeem our responsibilities in the administration of consolidated ranger districts under existing standards. But we are doing just that little thing in Region 1, as is witnessed by John Taylor's procedure in putting over the Supervisor's work plans. Nothing more to say on this topic, because it is being done in this Region.

Topic 2:

There is a phase of this subject that can be handled on the Forest; in fact, several phases. The Supervisor can question the manner in which his office is managed, whether he is devoting too much or too little time to minor details, why there is no end to complaint cases, why his Forest has not reached a point where friction between permittees and the Service is virtually unheard of, and so on and so forth. The Clerk can question the manner in which records are kept, etc., and the rest of the personnel of the Forest can question methods and suggest or recommend betterment, bearing in mind that questioning does not necessarily mean immediate change.

However, we should not question everything we do, since if we did, there is grave doubt as to whether or not we should get anything done, and here enters the matter of judgment. One ordinarily has neither the time, the ability, nor the equipment to determine absolutely the best methods to follow, but if we use the term "questioning" to mean careful thought and study with a view of suggesting to or considering with other qualified persons, such changes as we deem advisable we will have questioned enough.

Topic 3:

There is no need to attempt reconciling standard methods with the idea that everything should be questioned. There is time enough to change methods when it has been determined as a result of our questioning or experience that a change is desirable.

Topic 4:

Of course, human nature is the biggest factor in our administration, just as it is the biggest factor in any civilization, and while it constitutes the fuel and gears of our machine, it also constitutes the sand in the lubricating oil, the brake on progress, the fly in the ointment, and all the rest of the annoyances(?) that compel questioning existing methods, policies and procedure. Very probably we would now be practicing deferred and rotation grazing one hundred per cent, were it not for the fact that the permittees questioned the method in the light of their experience as practical stockmen dealing with conditions and not theories. When we question, don't let us fail to question our own pet methods, theories and policies, as well as the other fellow's.

Topic 5:

How much additional work is created for the Supervisor when an addition is made to his staff? Why not put the question concerning Ann's age—it is just about as explicit. Most certainly the addition of an assistant supervisor to the supervisor's staff would cause a little work in determining the amount of necessary supervision which, if out of proportion to the results secured by such an addition, will lead to further readjustment in the staff. There are too many factors to be considered before determining the amount of time the Supervisor should spend in inspecting the work of his assistant for this question to be answered. In the first instance, up to a very short time ago, there was nothing available by which to measure a man's qualifications for the job; there were no job descriptions nor was there any agreement as to just what his qualifications should be. Consequently, assistant supervisors ran the gamut from the technician, thinking and talking only in the jargon peculiar to his specialized profession, to the rough and ready big "he man" of the great outdoors, who insisted that it was his night to howl. Included in this array of talent, was the professorial type, who by his reticence and reserve, invariably chilled the enthusiasm of any co-operator with whom he came in contact. Certainly, any and all of such assistant supervisors increased the job load of the Supervisor, and it is probable that, when the job load exceeded the load their efforts took from his shoulders, he began praying for relief.

The amount of time a supervisor should spend inspecting an assistant supervisor's work, should be just enough to determine whether or not the work agreed with the supervisor's ideas or whether or not the assistant's ideas were correct. In other words, the assistant supervisor should be, to the best of his ability, just what the title implies—one who assists in bearing the supervisor's burden and not one who adds to it.

1. The handling of the common every day jobs should be left to the individual. Isn't this one place that we could reduce a lot of work and worry? Why should we be particularly interested in methods of doing common jobs? Why not be satisfied to look for results rather than at the methods? It isn't human for us all to do things alike. One man's method is awkward to another, but the results may both be satisfactory. Seems to me we had better leave the methods to the individual, but insist on results. Of course, if we don't secure results, then the method may need revision.

4. As Rex has stated, human nature is the biggest thing in our administration. It is the one big problem. If solved our troubles should be over (at least we would be dead). While I am not optimistic enough to believe we can find the answer, I believe we could ease some of the pain by study. Every man needs to be studied and handled a little different than his neighbors. Possibly a little more flexibility in placing men where they fit the job is needed; or possibly it is a case of gradually overcoming some minor dissatisfaction that will effect the cure. Maybe we need to do a little "weeding out." Here again I doubt if a standardized method would work in all cases. Some method, if available, would be of the greatest assistance as a start. Why not the same as attacking any problem? Analysis of each member of the force is necessary. Find out **why** and then try to arrange **how**. The big handicap is time to do it. It is no doubt a job for the supervisor, but to get it done may necessitate not doing some other job. We really need an analysis of the whole job to see where all the twenty-four hours each day are used.

5. What is an assistant anyway? In other words the question might be stated "Is an assistant an asset or a liability?" Does the assistant really assist or is he primarily in training to keep the organization running? Actually upon analysis how much does an assistant do that isn't one of these things: (1) clerical work, (2) ranger work, or (3) specialist work? Isn't it possible that here we might find one of our serious "shor's" in the machine?

There is little doubt but every assistant increases the supervisor's work in regards supervision. If then the assistant does mainly clerical, specialist, and ranger work, at least in some of which he is not especially efficient, we are increasing the work of the supervisor in addition to his supervisory and training work. It requires more time to supervise clerical work done by one who isn't a clerk.

Here again we run into the human element. Unless the assistant knows his job, is capable and willing, the supervisor finds he has another liability and his own work has increased rather than decreased. The new (or old) job should be carefully analyzed before new assistants are put on. We should find out whether we

need assistant supervisors, clerks, specialists, or perhaps be better off without them.

James F. Conner

Harney

Custer, South Dakota

I think there is a big field ahead in the study of the best methods of doing the common every day jobs that go to make up the routine work of every man in the organization. This was pretty well brought out in the job analysis of positions on the Forest. When the analysis was first started there were wide differences in the time which different men argued should be assigned to a job. The heavier the work on a District the shorter the period it seemed to require for doing each job. This led to time studies and quicker and better methods of doing jobs. There is still much to be done on improvement in methods of doing the little every day jobs. Everyone agrees that if you expect to do anything at golf you must handle your clubs a prescribed way. Why doesn't that hold true with scaling? If you want to develop speed there must be one best way. Then why not have that determined so that when a new man is instructed he will be instructed in the method that will make him the best scaler. I have never seen any instructions on how to burn brush, yet there is certainly a right way and a wrong way if you are to avoid scorching. Any new methods should certainly be thoroughly tested before being made standard.

Our rapid advancement has largely been through the use of standards but that does not mean that a standard should be accepted as the last word. The easiest way to show up the defects in any standard is to follow it out to the 'nth degree. You are then in a position to suggest improvements. To let each man do things his own way would be a step backward.

Adding to the Supervisor's staff does create new work for the Supervisor but it should immediately relieve him of detail and reduce his work in proportion to the ability of the new man to absorb it.

